

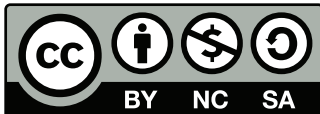
Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

Polyphony



Omar Willey

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Polyphony

poems by Omar Willey

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Soprano

Amber

some admire the beauty
of a bee trapped in amber, coolly
sealed in time's preserve
poetic metaphor for eternity

I think of the beauty
of seeing the amber slowly melt away
as dew recedes from petals
and watching the bee
unenthralled, now free
fly away

Bond

Two share the bond of separation.

Time cloven hearts, no love, no assuage
for them; a lone silent empathy.
As she, he recalls how in a touch
the world would seem again: darkened gloams
at riverside, warm with the blush of blood;
quiet words exchanged for silent thoughts —

her beauty was never a question,
his youth (so youthless) no obstacle.
Parallel they held near each other
and shared imaginings of a time
aeonic in its stasis, their words
its sole motion: there, no numerals

mar its eternal concomitance,
no stolid masques enacted. Serene
communications, naked and real —
shared: "We shall meet at the horizon,
where heaven meets the plain, forever."
Friendship should be so binding as vows

repeat their memories; horizons
know terra and firmament fissure,
invisible to mortality.
They stretch now their arms toward an embrace
that is not felt. No sadness, solemn
upon their hearts; all is memory.

Two share the bond of separation.

Prints

I find still your spoors about my den, strands
of hair, fingerprints in talcum, parfumerie, old
traces of blood where we

loved, my fluid and your fluid
in pattern of a voluptuous flower, one
as I would give to you; all

as broken branches from my life's tree
where you have trespassed. Love, for love
that gnaws rapidly within, I killed a hunter

I had become, cold
in the light and begging warmth only
your body could provide; now I am bitten

where frost turns hoary and blue my flesh,
and, instinct to kill now bound, cast like demon out, I
cannot here live nor feed. This wilderness engulfs me.

I find no passion remains; all is ice and dust; I am rendered
as a waning man, where all about is nothing. I wonder as my
misery turns to the numb of dying and crimson

trickles life away — if I had not loved, still
could prey on those... But yours are the prints
impressed upon my barren environ

where I am dying

Ideologies dissolve

loose labels: you a dyke, and me unenlightened
breeder male, an other: your flesh is pale and your
blue eyes peer through hard spectacles, and I
probably the great-grandson of the slave of your
pioneer kindred, inheritor of scars —

they matter nothing when the rain drives
you to shelter next to me, and all I think
is how very beautiful the curvature of your
lips and the fullness of your form beneath
the droplets speckling your hardened
leather jacket and frost-spiked hair;

somewhere it defies all dogma to tell:
who might think less of you simply for being
told that you are lovely, and surely voices
prattle in the 'hood for my noticing,
though I've heard worser there, and

their words of us are self-pitiful; to
escape the shallow loneliness of stiff
indifferent whispers, and then, absence of
care: human flotsam crests on silent sound waves
of the fear of truth and personal touch —
who cares, who does not.

madness to suppose, but the only way
out is to tell you that you have come
into my life and transfigured it without so
much as knowing or trial; and that this
is all that matters.

After youth is

if i were young i would idolize you:
the most beautiful girl in the world; i
would wait upon thee every day, my queen,
if only en passant your graceful glide;
i'd sing about the light within your eyes,
the life within your breast, and talk about
the scope of love and love's desire.
if i were still young I would sing to you
a myriad of drunken rhapsodies
and tell to you above all how gorgeous
aurora is upon your azure eyes;
and I would take your hand and hold it to
divine the pulse of universal force
within that moves all things from form to soul;
and I would know that this is sufficient;
and as we touched, I would dissolve into
the meaning of annihilation, gone
what was me once, become what I could not
be certain; if I were young, if I were —
but i am not. Yet i shall reach my hand,
while knowing We will never touch, to you.
The act of reaching is the vital thing;
i know that now the universe does not
for any second care about my soul's
eradication, what i am or was,
the meaning of it all or anything;
that you are beautiful above all things
is all that matters; and while i retain
my voice, my eyes, my hands, my reason, while
the light remains a spark upon your eye,
no matter that my wisdom contravenes,
your beauty shall fill up my life, and give
me rhapsodies forevermore to sing,
and this remind me of the youth i lost
in being much too long without you near.

Sub Rosa

I hold to you a rainbow blossom,
A silent covenant
To sanctify our unity.

The shadows of our souls are mute
in glow of holy light;
Alone we bind our solitude.

The progress of my scars

I watch the progress of my scars.

Open wounds ooze and bleed to form
upon my rend an armor cold—
this dries and cracks and tears away
revealing, underneath the old,
new wounds: each time more shallow,
closer to a whole, yet still at root

a scar. No way to bind this; there
is only healing, memories
of hurt that tell me quietly
that my travails show consequence
where I have grown, what my flesh
shall not know again without

pain and grim reflection—perhaps
this is the knowledge never hid.
One cannot forget the claw
that blazons history into
soft skin and bone the character
of all mortality; it writes

all human destiny, as lines
within our palmistry (these, too,
are markers of our future);
as certainly as we are life
the hands of time shall notate us,
all sigils on its palimpsest,

with scrawl and scratch and deep impression
that we may always recollect.
I shed this scab and keep a scar.
One more milestone on the path
of myriad, an index not
of suffering, but unity

with all that lives within and out,
a cleaving—present, future, past
in continuity; when I
lose sight of who and where I am,
these insignia recall
for me, for life, my earthly thread.

The sun now rising

does not paint the sky magenta and carmine
nor its light like rivulets of molten
silver erode the darkness passing; your eyes not
spangled with dewdrops'
autumnal gleam, and I, no
poet to fashion and from

your truth figure
metaphors and prostitutions. These
imaginings are squander. I am
but a lone human
being as you, sensuous, tender with
ineffable emotions, are such;
this moment between us, between
other moments we might live — another
moment we may

lose in impresent contemplations of
that which we are not. No
thought but when
the wind bristles the hairs
of this extending hand touching
your perfume

we are now.

Vibration

Your voice reverberates
upon my flesh, returning to you
the palpitation of my heart.

These vibrations pass silently
away, lost within the
damp air that surrounds us
and bears to each the other
hesitant shiver.

Recognition

It was an accident, I think, the way you brushed
against me so gently that I stopped.
The slight blush behind your smile and apology.
We knew nothing of each other, but had
come together for an instant, exchanged electricity; I

would tell you in some otherwhere world
how the thoughtless touch you
gave me awareness of what I am missing;
my body a little, but all of my breath
trembling with excitement and the know.

I wished our careless touch would go forever
on and into both of us, and merge
me into you. All these things felt. Instead,
we smiled to turn away with civilized
politeness and potential death where
there would have been.

Bow

Another day begins, as any other.
The dull awakening. Trivialities,
maquillage and dishes: daily glamour.
I am quiet in the dim banality.

I watch, and see. You would find it mundane;
to hear me speak, you would think me mad,
unguarded — without artifice, you stand

in light, flowing iridescent swirls upon
perspiring fingers; your blue folds in blue.
Head gently bowed (hide the eyes from
sidelong glance), your hair a sable veil

whose threads protect your beauty. The dawn
illuminates me as it reflects
your delicate flesh; your eyelids close,
and the light is gone: from me, from you

a subtle emanation — all the sound
is silent, but for your quiet weary
meditation. Alone, you dissolve
in private rhapsody, and I am dumb

to let this moment (as so many) die,
untold to you, unknown to me. I search
my pitiful mute vocabulary
for brilliant wit, some phrase not trite,

to call poetry, as if these minute
observations were a truth — yes, truth:
Truth, to hide how my quietude longs
for feeling breast to breast our heartbeats' rhythm;
truth, to stifle my yearning to be held —

but I am beyond words. This seeking shiver
of my empty hands will force a paper
to record by token and quill this lapse
and that will be all:

this unspeaking becomes a vacuum, void
aspect of a warm alienation,
where I dwell; in presence of your beauty,
in still reflection wonder, waiting still
for the fastening of your last button.

Tenor

Snowfall

The first season is not spring
but fall;
leaves revealing their carotene gold
uncloaked,
and branches shaking off the dead —
winter
rest. Slow regeneration in
a bud,
a tap, a bloom, a splint of green
promise
preceding the golden age.

There is something before the nothingness
that must
decay to bring forth life, as humus needs
the moss;

the cycle begins in death, not
a door
that closes, but an opening into the
future.

Stigmata

As words unspent are ineffable, mute the white
light that refracts red, green, blue upon your eyes
is, too, invisible;
unseen would die starved of appreciation: I
must tell it to you, your beauty.

Pensive, you sit; darkness upon your mien and
mantle, you turn your eyes away in stillness, to
tell me you have lived, with this,
your beauty (I shiver with wonder to think of
you then); how darkness was your sole protector
as it veiled you in its black invisible—
beyond comment and reach
of the blank stares, the murmur of dumb voices and
the wounds that sunlight inflicts

as your eyes reflect in voids
of careless gazing; how you wished then your beauty
die, and how you cut yourself from yourself, away,
as though leprotic cursed; how fresh scars hide still
deeper scars so irremediable, your
compromise: scars to displace thy stigma, concealed.
Still they stare. I—could not...
could not, you say, I cannot be beautiful.

In the silences between our words our thoughts lurk
easily. Thoughts, my thoughts:

to show the world that sees only a calm smile
and affable visage emotion would chill
their marrow. I could have shown you then, before
your eyes, the cut—
seldom heals. Diamonds, crystalline, beautiful
as your limpid eyes in the mauve sunrise light—they
show no scratches on their hardened faces before

they shatter completely. The gem which scars easily
yet never shattering — such beauty reveals
always the flaws in its cuts, but cannot hide; this
Platonic beauty has been glimpsed by eyes, tongues
have whispered it to tell how; but their glances
vile, words obscene, become

my stigma, never quite dead. It cannot die,
though I would, perhaps, kill
its pain, knowing such things are impossible.

Orphan light, voracious silence are the curse
of those disowned by their reflections, still yet
beautiful beneath all guise; our denial
is a bond that draws us together as it chains
us to our pasts if we choose to deny.

No reparations now for these unnatural,
no repeal of scars. I bear
to you my hand, our stigmata still bleeding —

touch me.

Changes

I have heard that people change
from you, but into what? Some dream
of peace and mercy known to none
on this here earth, or into whisps
that one might fashion into some

steam sculpture, taking form of that
which traps it? Spirits are without
such substance as bronze that melts
and is remade at will by craft,
and we are spirits first, above

all else: our flesh may change and must,
of course, and even its emotion,
experience of all the world,
reflections, intimations, thoughts —
yet these are us so much as soil

is part of grass and tree, the well
a part of thirst, or wings the stuff
of wind and sky; it is our one
true sacrament, our path through life
and gate divine that opens us

to others, where the heavens are,
but is not us; for we are love,
are beauty, are the brilliant light
eternal — this cannot change:
it only grows as we must grow,

ever brighter —

Humble origins

A broken bone, a strawberry sore
are the anchor of philosophy; the butterfly
blot of first menstrual blood, the pain
in the chest begin our quest for humanity;
yet we are told to look beyond – what?

These humble origins have grace: the truth
of a sleepless week, the mortality of
orgasm – such things are foundations
of all our art, all creation – a body
of work to fill ten billion life times –

How could one see past the physical; a mis(sed)
direction: the warmness radiant in your
parted lips as you breathe first life is not
a spiritual gift, but rather the gift of taking,
if only for awhile, a fleshly form

between your arms and gently grant a wish
not from some abstract soul or insubstantial psyche,
but heart and blood that rises ever so
slightly in temperature within your embrace
and transforms me, and you into something greater.

11 by 14

The window opens upon the world
and limits nothing now three floors up,
in life or death; he looks out at
nothing: only wind replies
to his vacant gaze, lifting his
long hair into a gauze
before his eyes

driving by, she
stops. City life is more than the sum
of streets paved with rain and the gait
of grim pedestrians, more than
make-up in the rear-view mirror
and cell phone blather, though one
forgets such things when there is work
and child care and thousand small
items on the the honey-do list.
Her hands twitch. Eyes are crusted dry.

These two will never know that they
have met in gaze, nor consider
all the possibilities of
what would happen if they looked just
one more time, and met each the
other's eyes.

A poem for Henry Grimes

Darkness is history
and we are black who
feel the dust and are
second (thoughts) fiddles, accompany
to witnesses.
Who might threnody the not-yet-

dead as us, shades of obscurity—you might
know how the thirty years
are a blade; silence cleaves us
of ourselves. Monk knew, and Newk (his silence
famous unlike others). You were

more than your destiny, the bass
pedestal on which Cecil stands (murmuring enter, evening
in the Smithsonian pale
vestibule, its unit structures of
walking unwalked, white
unmoved by your arco gliss. They shall

die, but all unnoticed.
You call; and I shall) only with
these murmur words dance
about your painting (upper
Egyptian hieroglyphs of sostenuto

with sounds all alone
yours against the silence
shadowing your life and death. You felt
The Call unanswered and (with (exit)
there was only, after Tauhid,
the vacuum, prana of nothingness where once

had been your eye gazing black
to all) now whitened, opaque as death.

Aleph Null

As nature, I create a silence,
universal;
around me, wilderness; inside
this ring, the center
me, drawn, Lenten, attending mind
concentrate

(Dust will not remain undisturbed

the emptiness of me, a focus.
Mute genesis,
where, purged of all language masks, I
am pure, am whole

again; the cipher around me
carved of stones

Cinders are scars of a dead flame

is the bourn of my temptation.
Dead thoughts there scream;
cacophonous choirs of undead
unwanted things

All hope is false) hope; the past rules all

too crawl at that perimeter
and plead entrance;
old words, moribund, to strangle
thoughts yet unspoke

rotting notions, screaming stifle
the blooming hush,
voice of the as yet unfelt idea—
nothing, nothing

*Nothing changes; all are powerless
All change is chaos, stasis is order*

crosses, ruptures my solitude;
here, the beginning.
No knowing (the vase without flowers,
without water,

the invisible hieroglyph
of the spirit)
There is only the breath primeval,
without motion.

Compound

History is made in glass.
Architects imprison these in their
makeup. Innocent as
black sheep, they consecrate the hours'
sacrifice, their preserve.

Nothing is caught, there nothing lost
in reflections: the machicolations
guard nothing but shadow
on the sundial numerals
and the silence of a sirocco.

Work For Hire

for Sheldon Moldoff

A single bristle makes no brush.
We could not complain, as we worked
in our quietude, each beside the other,

doing "a good job." We had no leisure
to discuss our artistry, only work;
the rest was asides, the chewing of time.

The studio was for the studious, not to breed stars. Many
more famous than I have passed, and shall pass again; they
will wear laurels. Others are lost to time, nameless

but for the lines in which we write our
anonymity. Renderings of lead and china
white will be remains, where pages turn

slowly yellow, then decay. Our work was ours, ideas —
they shall outlast the work and worker
who was mere creator, trying only to

survive in such times where heroes only could thrive
in the images. Living: living was what we knew,
and I have lived.

Distraction

Wheels grind, and there are clouds.
A brick high school without windows
and a wrecking ball —

dissembled eyes, wrought hands,
eyes that do not blink, accord
of soft machines and oil hum

Turn away —

in the ring of tired clang,
idle clenched hands folded upon
laps adorned with sequin and thread,
it is hard to focus my resolve —

upon the bright brown eyes and
bra strap peeking through the shoulder
cling of clothes:
another pair of thighs are shape —

sparks of memory: summer patterns.
Wind breathing through the avenues
of lost infatuation. Could she feel this
if I touched her? Would she
regain her innocence? And transform
me into electricity?

Just fancy —

Blonde antipode

The trick is to seem, not to be.
Being is for people who can
afford the frosty gaze,
the sear of jealous tempers,
the drool of insincere mouths and
the clench in my chest when I wake.
There is safety in the mundane,
and I am therefore typical,
if only to make it all subside
into stillness, like the silt
stirred up by storms
outside Sarehole Mill;
once past, the water is calm and
clear. The weather wanes. All is ease.

So, typical. So typical
of what? Myriad stereotypes
to assemble into some kind
of me. Pieces of this and that.
Reflections not complete, just some
approximate me, but these are
not me—even if I knew
who I really am, if I cared
about that sort of thing. When the
poet wrote about the dancing
girls, it was a mask, and not her
self, split open. And so my mask.
This only seems contradiction
if you believe all you see.

I know you see my veil and guise.
You have told me you admire them.
Can you see more? Can you peer deep,
not looking through me, not into
your images of me, or theirs

taken from People magazine
and television talk show tripe —
but me, the slightly fearful child
who wants to love and be loved now
for all of me, the girl without
and dormant goddess within?
I shall hide these like an Easter
egg, for you to crack and prove me
that you think your search worthwhile.

I shall be typical, if you
will believe my words. But beautiful,
too, brilliant, too, like moon upon
the harvest grain. I will stand out, too,
and I will make my marks, beyond
cliches, their patina of stale
normality, if you will have me,
I will remove with you.
I say to you such wild things and
hope you will believe not what I
have said, but what you feel within.

The storms begin again. Water
soon will turn to mud, soon become
opaque; and I shall don my cloak
to weather it once more, but know:
for those who wait, my mystery.

Alto

Nine Crows

Nine crows gather in the naked trees;
their cabal breathe intimate and dark
billows of thin fog, as leaves, fall
just between their overseen:

the new-laid soccer field,
surrounded with barbed wire
fence: this will be the site of lost
childhoods and numbers run;

a maze of broken concrete, glass
and shredded steel, where minds are spent
like wet ammunition and dead
ends grow plainly visible.

They preen and nod so knowing
each in their sequester: their bills
silent, their claws dictation,
wings outspread, then all is still.

Tintinnabulation

he wears a cell phone hands free
(not to block the iPod earbuds)
pretending vapidly to listen
to his own bullshit blither
and the trite screamings of the
dumbass on the other end

the bus drives into darkness

wizened, crotchety old bastard mumbling
to himself how the young lack all
respect, and sense of suffering; dying
in nostalgia for a time that sucked
his dreams down like a toilet sucks urine

neon lights barely flickering

the oldest corner of marble and
cobblestone in the city, sheltered from
the elements by wrought-iron pergola,
weathers the din of Marty Robbins muzak,
two talentless bands in different bars playing
the same Led Zeppelin riff (white boys think
this is the blues), and the inanities of college
students, eager for their first drunken screw

the driver breaks into Motown songs

grave pedestrians with headphones, cell
phones, idiophones raise parapets of noise
to nullify all reception, and no one finds
odd when people will not shut the fuck up
when no one cares, there is no listening,
until silence once more has value

here—

Eschatology

For all who have had their hearts
lacerated by the flak of glass shard,
flesh pierced through by iridescent
spines of steel bleed out vitriol

the snap of bone against aluminum
and lifelessness of muscle
bare ghastly mortality, legs where arms
should be, and teeth scattered like dice—

for you, I'll put fourteen letters
on the back of my plush new Escalade and
call it good.

Reminiscence

The chaise longue holds him firmly in
his late afternoon ritual: espresso and glossy.
Time told by wheels of trendy mini
vans, whining sounds of soccer kids and fast food.

Reflecting from the image of the SUV
window, the school where his
two children toil daily; he often tells
them tales

of regalia: how he brought a cow
to its rooftops, and floated garbage
bags with hydrogen down its halls and
the all-night concerts that staved

off the nights of wonder where
the next meal came from and
what would be left after nuclear winter
and mutual assured destruction, how

in college kicked a television
set down six flights, riddled Reagan's
effigy with darts and monstrous
questions beside

(all the while unanswering the questions
about the hash brownies, cocaine
potatoes, LSD) something kids
and everyone should live

without the prison of nostalgia,
without the slavery of sentiment—
this was the dream, then... He returns
to a suburban

Dorian Grey reversal film
now: old images of self beatified
obscure the rot of here and
now so slipped away like

scraps of poetry,
worn album covers — markers
of young rebellion buried
in coziness, bed bath and beyond...

None of this was planned
in marijuana haze and chats
around the Poor Man's James Bond
pipe bombs slipped into the neighbor's

Brand names and leather interiors,
principles are now thought with
interests in mind, rate and time
the measure of life

for the children, sure, and wife
one must sacrifice all sorts of
what was worth fighting for
that he cannot recall

the time his parents visited and left
him with his childhood Holy Bible and
a foul taste, and vow that he would
never be like them...no

one ever becomes exactly like his
parents' dreams of an insulated world, or
of course not like them; everyone should
fight such resignations, and

for just a moment, the old embers in his
night-brown eyes flicker with approval
before the clouds wash away
the sun, the light, the glass reflex

and then returns to reading The Village
Voice article about Ani DiFranco and
the politics of approval. What does it
say for CSI: Miami tonight...

His mug perched on the teak,
reflection distorted in the drops
trickling and ready to evaporate
into the thin air of ethic

Walking Rauschenberg,

beneath glass and wire
rim, pomade glazed goatee and wry
(never vapid)
self-satisfaction like the ankh that dangles empty

above
upon your second-hand Nehru) flares
digging Tony Bennett on designer
headphones, thinking if
(it's called that anymore

you are, wow, a rebelde, Ché chez
an individual
patchwork martyr, self-stylish as if it were (grand
creation to imbibe the dross of your
bleachwhite dying world and forth

spew from your mouth this crap
once) removed from assholes
of corporations who shit it first on you,

on lost costumantry, turned on swirled
like a revolution that will not flush, rape (all
in sight, fucked with a poison

and you die)) surely you, surely
didn't believe toohipgottagono believe what
was left
(implying, of course, care) No, what makes you (for
you are made,
by capture tranquilized, resold to you
no longer a sel(l))(cell) — self,
such a mystery

Moire

each drop holds
a mirror

upside down, turvy-toppy
bent incidences
streak across the glass

bent incidences sparkle where
reflections freeze—
inverted
miniatures of mirror beads
eyes
glass
and rain

beyond this moire, broken
city
itself reflecting
rows of Ezra Pound petals

pass swiftly by and by
to others I am one such strange passenger:
without so much as root
wherever my feet pause—or stop

Before the condos are planted

the croak of the lone tree frog reminds
pastoral is dead, subdivided
theirs, theirs, theirs and maybe

some space we are absorbed; some dream
drown in car cacophony and the pneuma
of mechanical chisel, metal teeth chew

the earth become asphalt, again. He
has scurried slowly across the field
to watch his swamp world filled

with the vacuity of forms and ideas
of progress.

Post-ironic non-detachment

Too many tongues-in-cheek stuck like
they had some reason to be there,
but no: just hiding in the bleak
belief that snide pop culture quips

are some sort of genuine knowledge,
when all they show is the vacuum
tube not only sucks but supplants
an intellect that might be used

for something other than garbage
repository: maybe some
existence in a world where there
are leaves and conversations grow.

The cold brutality of one
unable to feel the pain or joy
of others; the cruelty of one
who knows so much less than one thinks

about the universe; smug and snug
in the armor of ignorance,
contemptuous carapace
to keep from feeling human —

after irony, there is only the
emptiness it always hid.
The life turned inward like a snake
gnawing its own tail, blinded by blood.

Sarcophagus

skeletal beneath the flesh where shivers in
a (here broken, for)) quiet solitude as

mysteries of the Stone: mute, dumb

as a veil, no longer (words were once a sigil, where
numbers did not) suffice—these now insensate
things

hidden, there (inclement mortality, yet transcendent)
shroud the limits of
an ineffable—end, where beginnings are foresworn.

As so often you leave

mundane traps your vision does not see
and my wishes are silent

therefore you will not know how
how a
how long
ing how timid
how warm
how much

how I

no you will not because
you see clearly before you the
press of your days dull
routine and all
that you or I would

want is so much less
than the duties of your disingenuity

Scrabbles

Scrabbles at the denim. Three, six, nine, twelve
fourteen
bones beneath the unwrinkled

green sigil, hieroglyph
that once marked warriors, now mere
ornament, meretricious.
Blood flows there, and marrow

but the hand, withdrawn, offers
not; eyes deep in shadow
regret their vigilance, and
are still.

Baritone

Myriad metaphors

Myriad metaphors — all are
mute: none
describe the light that shimmers
reflections of the mauve setting
sun's light upon the darkness
of your eyes, nor the
lineament of the
air that, heavy from your fragrance, cleaves
us together
as it emanates from your
breast and gives me life.

Silent Night

Ten thousand past specters denude themselves
beneath a blanket darkness. No fear there
to strangle secrets, no untidy
retributions from a whisper light.

My hand now curled, numb bears a not quite
invisible, a wound where once I wiped
away my mouth: it no longer murmurs
words to cry the twinge of memory.

Held to you, by light of Eve, warmth of
night. Eye unblinking, see the rivulets
of crimson not; where scars unseal themselves
as mute mouths now, unpursed lips telling deaf

ears tales of soft and liquid history:
how, beneath dusts of time, unstirred passions
wither and are unmoved, but for your touch:
still unto death. This choir of blood

now pale within your radiance—a plaintive
vocalise. A human hand might hear
and heal its silent melancholy song,
but no fingers reach in counterpoint: I

am a cappella. The question fades and dies:
unanswered call, its dissonance. Beside
me, lie like moonlight; never see this
uncertain reach before it dies in down;

no, do not turn your sleeping smile to me
and gaze upon my visage, fallen; leave
to me your backside turned, and unseen face
away this moment, lost as mystery.

Splendour

Ten thousand years and thirteen billion bodies
rough sketches, before nature perfected the form
of beauty cut out of the light which defines you; the
fruition of cosmic design. No glass

sufficient to measure the magnitude
of your heavenly body, and so it blinds
them all to the soul within, but you
— you could take me in your hands like a dewdrop

in the morning sunlight, scattering prism
reflections, and I would change as each ray
changes into ether without mass or form;
dissolve into your divine radiance.

Photo Op

Another night on the M1, mist from wheels
capturing the halogen blue of auto lights,
and slowly spraying spring rainbows
that decay into the wind. I too lose myself
in the haze. Too young to remember, too
young to be in awe of the simple gifts,
so it is said. What is beauty? What matters?
Theses for poets and philosophes to
debate in books I will never read.

In the reflection of reflections I see
a gallery of images surround me:
pictures to mark the moments of my life
where I could smile. Photogenic,
always, but not entirely there, not
in the pictures somehow, but of them as
a hermit crab is of her hermitage.
Even this one you remind me: I recall.
It was just clarification. I was never
there to be famous, nor quite on a lark.

I think about the separation.

Would they have shared my causes, and my sense
the world has gone quite mad? Could they take this
loneliness and soften it with love and random
kindnesses? Probably not. Likely they would drift from
me with jealous words and petty notions of
security. Mirror, mirror: who's the fairest,
who's the biggest, who's the quickest one
to be through with it all? But we were
there, together, naive contestants
in the people pageantry, a not-so
beauty contest, holding ourselves for all
to see.

My fifteen minutes past, pasted then
cut out and (mercifully) become a news
footnote. Such is the fickleness
of taste and chance and circumstance.
It's okay. Fame is not my thing. It
was only clarification. I didn't expect
a title or congratulations, and didn't
have them bestowed on me. All I
wanted was to sink into my chair
and be able to sit upright, not feeling
the burden anymore. What I missed was chance.
I could have stood with all of us, all smiles,
and bared myself to the world as a trio
(or quartet, if she'd have us) of friends,
brought together by some fluke of biology but
now inseparable. That, too, has past.

You remind me of it all; you hold the paper
in your hands and memory. I just smile in echo
of that moment, and the rain washes
quickly over the glass and it all fades
in again: the road is uncertain tonight.
Lights flicker still through the torrents.
This is my exit.

Ribbon

Time is a bright black ribbon in
your hair unwinding
the opposite of the clock –

fingers slow extend to
touching
at the contact is all
stasis: each impulse

of electric apprehension
alone, before all thought and
perception; in this
in the moment,

and, at the knot where time
after time contrives itself
to hold
no past, no future tense
only present, perfect,

as myriad strands of sunlight
reflecting back expose the
truth as they are undone
by your gentle hand.

If

I want to dream
of you and all
sensations that clothe
you suddenly reveal your
naked beauty

Sometimes necessities

Impressions of a passage since
covered with memory: the carpet
spangled with evening sequin
and pearls drawn through with gold
into a carcanet; silent,
stillness fallen gently so rebukes
all dialogue, refuses to be stirred;
the looking-glass shows mere abstract
shapes and shallow focus of
the slightly weeping dawn through
shut Venetian blinds, and broken
red chaise draped with camisole—

The tousle of vacant clothes bedside
slowly takes your form and figure full
of life and recent love still etched
upon your breast; straps and bands
of worn elastic reach around
and gird your morning modesty.
So it begins, this twilight rite
of sometimes necessities,
this parting, of veils and sleeping
lovers becomes your dignity
while keys and spreads of the mundane
are your immediate return.
There will be more, most certainly,
small joys, but this makes numbers, hands
into a pleasant haze while
there is still time, is always time.

Intangible

White burning metal illuminates the burnish teak
where your consolation lies before me: the glow
of your image, this
picture memory.

Your frame absorbs the soft
lambence, to my eye returns
an apparition: incandescent billows

shudder

shimmering in each wave modulation the flux
of your diffracted symmetry.

Suspended moment: this
vision, of eyes grown dusky with reflection as they
avert; your amber tresses glisten with
bare shoulders' perspiration; your spine caress against
the cedar shutter door — I

pause, recall our sympathy.

Hourglass sands reverse their cascade, delineate
your figure beneath the
peignoir silk touched fluorescent green. Darkness
alone

holds time in this moment of the mystery.
Did not this wind hover about us
and waft between us where
the perfume of our bodies mingle
surround with the other essence

each of us, did
not your nape skin tremble then with
blush beneath the shadow silent — no
love would resonate
my hollow cavity where syncopates

your pulse with mine: this is all
we know, this moment binds; these uncertain
fingers retract perspiring from your heat,
delicate.

This frame silences
the motion, the spirit animate surrounds
your body corporeal, preserves only a
moment past; this intangible reflection gives life
to this lifeless would picture, if it could, no frame,
no captured silence before words becalmed
to nothing – still it lives. No kiss, no blood
pulsates suddenly wordless against our cold lips, no taste
upon our tongues the salt of passion quiets
my bristling thoughts.

I hold alone an image.

Midnight moonlight

Silken, supine, midnight moonlight
cobalt blue upon the curve of her
ilium, she lies beside her lover, eyes
averted, searching. Silent
as the mountain snow drives through the vale,
inward she turns, her visions: (A
girl, then (a lady, a woman, and what
then? she) knew none of this
; so may questions so may (with stone
opacity) youth, a life: these are not
known until lost. In this her love's
flesh, her mortality forgot, now.
Only the question, beside her
self, present. She would have no form, pure
desire unite and merge their
essences (calm her lover upon)
her breast: pure love, unquestioned questions.

The shadow (of snow upon the wall) — turns
her lips toward him with whisper: You
see of me many images. You
kiss gently this form, curl
about your fingers these locks that
veil me — for these, for whatever you
(have, will) see of me, for all these impressions do not love
them, but what lives within: love me,
love me for my invisibility — she
sinks, spent, into thought solitude.

Her skin shivers beneath the furrows
as his fingernails bite softly
into her shoulders; beneath the
moisture of his breath she feels (the words): You
are, love, and all (I desire) only. Not
for the line draws your calf to thigh, nor

the dilation of your eyes, slight, as I
touch your hand — not for the berry brown
of your areolae, or the sharp
hard bone of your mouth beneath your kiss — I
— no other way, love, than this — I
could not —

I cannot love the absence of
the space, the light your body absorbs:
Do not fear your beauty;
your beauty is you.) Such might he
say, she thinks, and perhaps is right.
She draws close the curtain, her
bosom to his, and shares with him
an invisible moment.

Connection

Twelve chimes distant toll. Striking light upon fingers.
A flow of electric excitement creates vision.
Passes from light to digital motion through chemistry

are not words, formulae. Sensations are all, and this
is knowledge: indices, intricate movement, eyes
receptive, emotions sightless. A spittle mote
more important than a blush or perspiration.
All sight unseen.

Two have known this, as millions now, connection:
remote as they are twain in the mystery.

We were twice ourselves then. We did not know.
How this
world, its drama written, nightly
slipping through our hands, our fingers creating the
real
from the intangible made this: tangible,

invisible feeling become palpable

through these palms, these words' place upon
your lips, your sweet perspiration, against
all possibility. No longer no closer
than the line between: no more detached protocol.
This is now, and we are real as the flesh
that touches now, digit to digit, and sends
from each to each our identity.

Eve

The cloak night shrouds your Cynthian form,
Shining endow with silver radiance
The universe cleaved with your velvet.